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# TRANSPORTATION

- PLAN
- IMPLEMENTATION  
PROGRAM



DRAFT: FOR DISCUSSION ONLY

Chinatown

Transportation Plan  
(June 22, 1989)

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## 1.0 Introduction

This document is the transportation component of the Chinatown Master Plan. It has been developed with input from the Chinatown Neighborhood Council (CNC), the CNC Transportation Subcommittee and area residents and merchants. The transportation plan relates specific strategies to objectives identified through this community process in order to improve existing conditions and address future issues in Chinatown.

This section of the plan presents the community process that was used to develop the plan and summarizes the existing transportation conditions in the Project Area. The second section presents a street hierarchy system to provide: 1) a framework for strategies proposed in this plan; and, 2) a guide for future planning and evaluation. The third section describes the objectives of the transportation plan and the strategies to achieve these objectives.

### 1.1 Community Process

The transportation component of the Chinatown Master Plan was developed with significant community participation. The Boston Transportation Department (BTD) and the Boston Redevelopment Authority (BRA) worked closely with the CNC to provide a process for community input, review and comment. This process was used to define issues, develop goals, recommend actions and review the results of analysis.

First, the CNC Transportation Subcommittee outlined issues and raised options, such as circulation changes, to address these transportation problems. From this input, a scope of work was developed to analyze existing conditions, evaluate proposed recommendations and develop actions for implementation. The analysis included both technical analysis by TAMS Consultant, Inc. and an assessment of benefits and disbenefits by BTD staff.

Next, the results of this analysis was reviewed with members of the CNC Transportation Subcommittee. This process identified several measures which were worth pursuing, but had potential impacts for access to businesses in the area bounded by Essex Street, Surface Artery, Kneeland Street and Washington Street. Several meetings were convened by the Transportation Subcommittee to review proposed actions with these merchants and to solicit further input. The actions outlined in this plan reflects feedback from these meetings, as well as recommendations from members of the CNC Transportation Subcommittee.



## 1.2 Study Area

The study area is graphically presented in Figure 1. This area has been divided into three sections for the purposes of this project and is described below:

Northern Section - This area is bounded by Essex Street, the Surface Artery, Kneeland Street and Washington Street. Most of the commercial activity in Chinatown is focussed in this area, including a significant number of restaurants and grocery stores that serve the local community as well as visitors from outside the area. This area borders on both the Midtown Cultural District and the Downtown Crossing area. Some residential uses are found along the periphery or above the commercial activity in this area.

Central Section - This section is bounded by Kneeland Street, Hudson Street, Marginal Road and Tremont Street. This area is a mix of residential and institutional uses; the primary institution is the Tufts/New England Medical Center. This area borders on the Theater District, to the west. The composition of the residential uses vary from two and three story buildings to high rise apartment buildings.

~~Southern Section - This section is bounded by Herald Street, Shawmut Avenue, E. Berkeley Street and Tremont Street. This area is primarily residential with some first floor commercial/retail uses along Tremont Street.~~

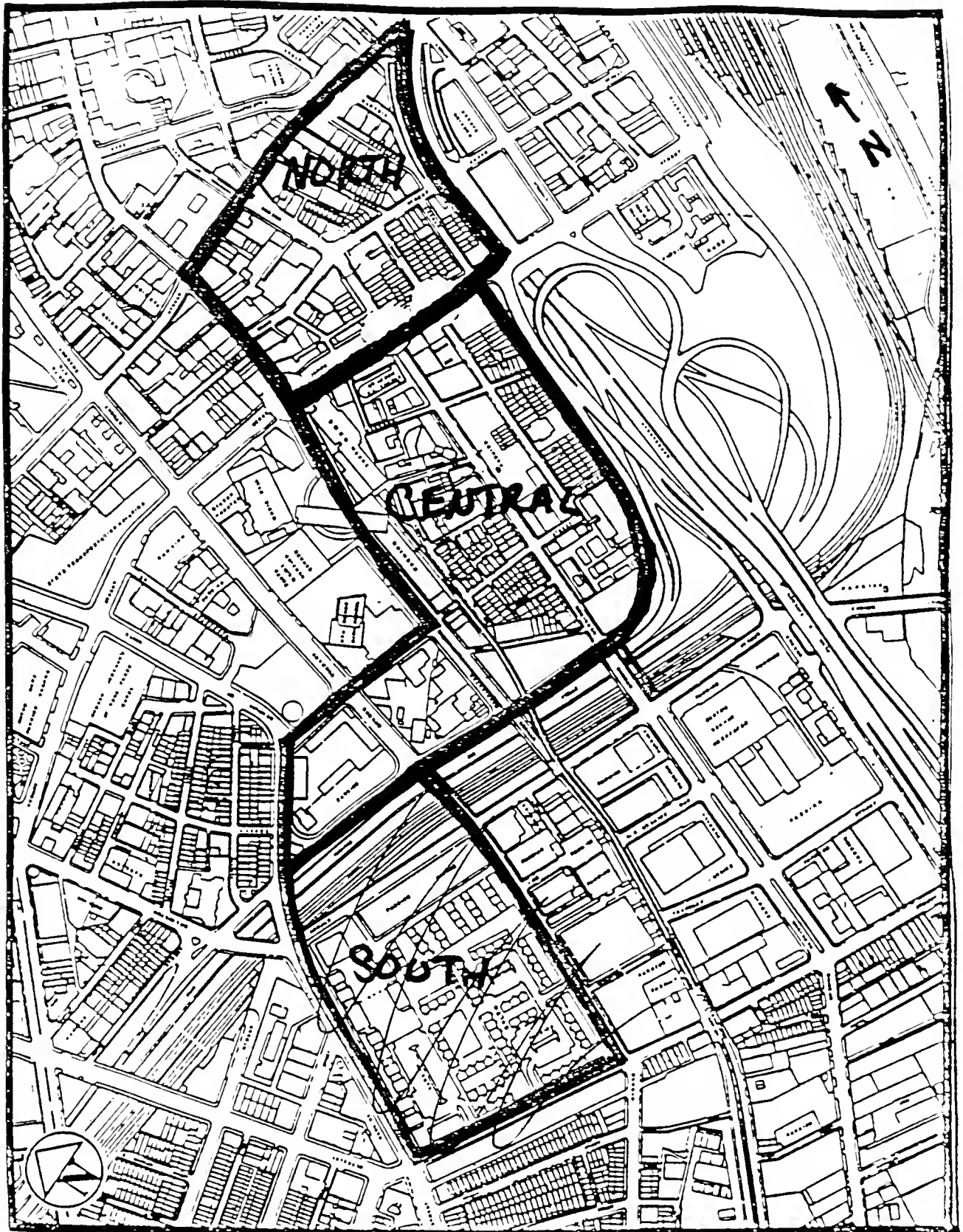
## 2.0 Existing Conditions

This section summarizes the existing transportation conditions in the project area. This compilation of information is based on several sources: data collection and analysis by TAMS Consultants, who were retained to provide technical support; data collection and analysis by BTM staff; and, input and suggestions from the Chinatown community during the public participation process.

This section is organized into six areas: first, traffic conditions are summarized; second, pedestrian conditions are presented; third, parking conditions are discussed, presenting existing on-street and off-street facilities; fourth, commercial activities are presented; fifth, transit service characteristics are described; and, sixth, development and infrastructure construction projects are discussed.



FIGURE 1: PROJECT AREA



KEY: BOUNDARY 



## 2.1 Traffic Circulation

The study area is criss-crossed by several major arteries that provide crosstown access and connections to the regional highway system. These streets include Essex Street, the Surface Artery, Kneeland Street, Tremont Street and Herald Street. Traffic volumes for these corridors are presented in Figure 1.2

Traffic congestion varies throughout the Study Area, with the highest levels of congestion occurring in the northern section. This is in part due to roadway capacity constraints in this area, including double parking by autos and commercial vehicles and conflicts between pedestrians and vehicles.

These problems persist during the PM rush hour, as well as on Saturdays. The congestion often contributes to gridlock conditions in and around the commercial area. An undesirable result of this congestions are trip diversions through the commercial core of the northern section on streets such as Beach Street and Harrison Avenue.

Congestion in the other sections is less pronounced. This can be attributed to less commercial/retail activity in these areas than the northern section. However, significant congestion does occur on Herald Street, particularly during the PM rush hour. Other traffic related problems in these areas are discussed below, as they relate to pedestrian circulation.

## 2.2 Pedestrian Circulation

A number of important pedestrian connections are made in the study area. These are:

- 1) Connections between the residential areas and the commercial area in and around Beach Street;
- 2) Connections to MBTA stations which serve the area;
- 3) Connections between the downtown area and the commercial area, particularly to access restaurants;
- 4) Internal pedestrian circulation within the residential areas and the commercial area.

The land uses in and around the Study Area generate a significant amount of pedestrian activity that makes these connections. In particular, corridors such as Beach Street and



# FIGURE 2 TRAFFIC VOLUMES (EXISTING)

AM PM AWD

ESSEX

SURFACE  
ARTERY

KNEELAND

TREMONT

HERALD

E. BERKELEY





FIGURE 4<sup>3</sup> - MIDWEEK PEDESTRIAN COUNTS  
12-2 PM (BOTH DIRECTIONS)



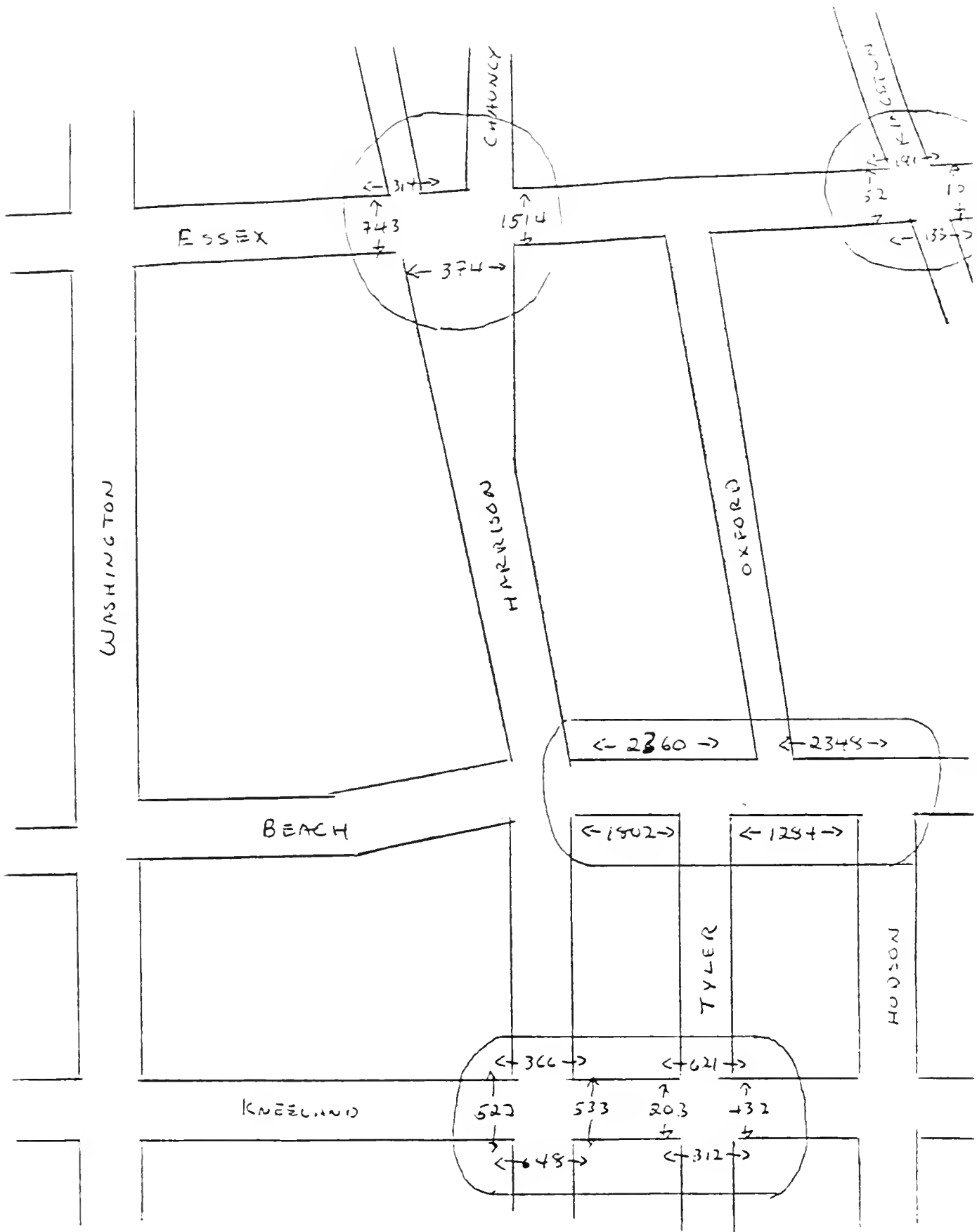


FIGURE 3 - SATURDAY PEDESTRIAN COUNTS  
12-2 PM (BOTH DIRECTIONS)



Harrison Avenue have high pedestrian volumes, related to the retail activity on these streets. Figure~~3a~~ and Figure~~4b~~ present pedestrian volumes sampled at several locations during the midday and on a Saturday.

Pedestrian accessibility is important throughout the Study Area. However, there are several factors which inhibit pedestrian mobility and safety:

- 1) Many connections are made by crossing at least one and often several major traffic corridors, such as Kneeland, Marginal, Washington or Essex Streets. These crossings are complicated by conflicts with traffic (usually turning movements at intersections) and the overall width of these streets. These issues are most prevalent in the northern section, but also occur in the other sections, particularly the pedestrian connections across the Masspike corridor.
- 2) Internal pedestrian circulation is often inhibited by inadequate sidewalk width. In some locations, sidewalk furniture or vendors reduce the available pedestrian right of way. These problems are most apparent in the northern section on Beach Street and Harrison Avenue.
- 3) Illegal parking is also a problem for pedestrians. It impedes access and decreases pedestrian safety by reducing sight lines for drivers. This issue is most prevalent in the commercial area of the northern section.

## 2.3 Parking

The parking supply in the area consists of both off-street and on-street parking. The off-street supply includes lots and garages open to the general public for a fee and private parking facilities with restricted uses. There is 3889 total off-street spaces in the off-street supply, of which 2362 are open to the general public and 1527 are private. Approximately half or 1185 of the public spaces are concentrated in the northern section of the Study Area. There are approximately 500 on street parking spaces in the Study Area, of which 300 are metered spaces, 185 are designated Resident Permit Parking spaces and 15 are Handicapped spaces.

There is a significant demand for public parking throughout the Study Area. A survey of Beach Street by the BTB indicates that the available metered spaces are full throughout the day with



an excess demand that results in significant illegal and double parking by approximately 20-25 passenger vehicles. A survey by the BTD of off-street parking facilities indicates that the demand for public off-street spaces is also significant. Approximately 90% of these spaces are full at 10:00 AM and 95% are full at 12:00 PM. However, it is important to note that the demand in the north section was less pronounced, with only 75% of the spaces occupied at 10:00 AM and 90% occupied at 12:00 PM. Much of the excess supply was in the Shopper's Garage on Beach Street which had 100-150 spaces available.

There is also a significant demand for resident permit parking spaces: approximately 400 permits are issued for this program. The use of off-street lots at the apartment buildings in the study area helps to alleviate some of this demand. However, it is important to note that the current balance between supply and demand occurs while the area has one of the lowest household auto ownership rates in the city, estimated at between 0.46 and 0.64 autos per household.

## 2.4 Commercial Loading and Unloading

Commercial activities are focussed in the northern section of the Study Area. Most of these businesses do not have off-street loading areas. As a result, much of the loading occurs on street. Also, many businesses, mostly groceries, ship goods out as well as receive goods. Deliveries are made from a variety of locations, including areas as distant as Pennsylvania. Delivery vehicles range from vans and single unit trucks to tractor-trailer trucks.

Surveys conducted on Beach Street indicate that 13 commercial vehicles are parked on this street at any time. The commercial vehicles park for a duration of one hour. Some long term commercial parking, four hours or more, was also observed, accounting for approximately 12% of the different commercial vehicles parked on street.

## 2.5 Public Transit and Private Transportation Services

Public transit service is provided by MBTA subway, light rail and surface bus lines. In addition, private bus operators provide service on the periphery of the area and shuttle van services provide services for restaurant workers.



Station and route locations for the MBTA services are illustrated in Figure 1.5. The convenience of these different services varies throughout the study area.

Northern Section - This section is best served by transit of the three areas. It is within close proximity of the Orange Line at Chinatown/Essex, the Green Line at Boylston Street and the Red Line at Downtown Crossing. The area is also within proximity of South Station, which provides Red Line, commuter rail, Amtrak and private bus service. In addition, several bus routes, most notably the #11 to South Boston and the #49 to Northampton, also serve the area. However, these routes primarily serve people with origins and destinations outside the Study Area.

Central Section - This section is also accessible to transit, particularly at the New England Medical Center Orange Line Station. South Station is also within proximity of this area. In addition to the two surface bus routes mentioned previously, this section is also served by the #43 bus to Ruggles and the #3 bus to the Boston Marine Industrial Park. Of these, the #3 bus is the route that provides service for residents of the Study Area.

Southern Section - Subway service is less convenient in the southern section, which is equidistant from the New England Medical Center and the Back Bay/South End Orange Line stations. Commuter rail and Amtrak service is also provided at the Back Bay Station. Several surface bus routes are located in the area, including the #49 to Northampton, the #43 to Ruggles and the #9 to Back Bay and South Boston.

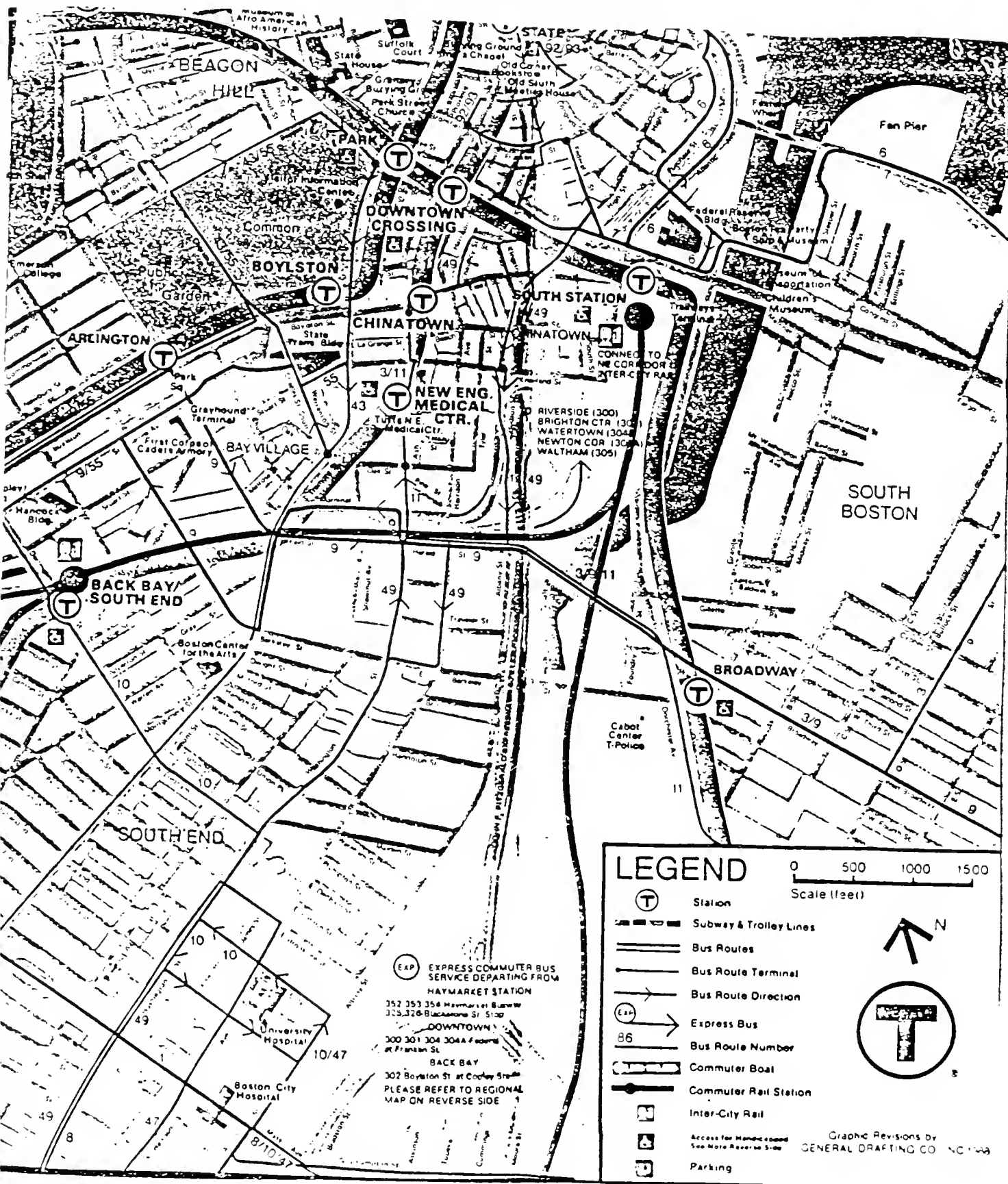
In addition to the current transit service characteristics, it is also important to note that new transit service is also proposed for the area, including:

The Roxbury Replacement Service - The current proposal for this service is an electric bus on Washington Street, entering an abandoned transit tunnel under Tremont Street and terminating at the Boylston Street Station.

The South Boston Piers Project - The South Boston Piers service is under study by the MBTA. Current proposals have identified an option that initially extends from South Station to the South Boston waterfront area, but ultimately could connect with either the Green Line or the Roxbury Replacement service at Boylston Street.



# FIGURE 5: TRANSIT SERVICE





Another important feature of the transportation system in Chinatown are the private shuttle van services provided by restaurants for their workers. This service provides two functions. First, it transports workers from Chinatown to suburban restaurants, some as distant as New Hampshire. Second, it is used as a delivery mechanism for businesses outside Chinatown to make pick-ups at the grocery stores in the commercial section in and around Beach Street.

The pick-up/drop-offs occur informally on street around two periods: 10 AM and 3 PM. Most of these activities occur on Beach Street and Harrison Avenue, where vehicles often double park and become a significant contributor to congestion in the commercial core.

## 2.6 Development and Infrastructure Construction

This section presents an overview of proposed development projects in and around the Study Area. Currently there are several proposals within the Study area. These projects are located in the central section and include residential development at the R3/R3A parcel at Washington and Oak, potential development of a parking garage by The New England Medical Center and residential development by Don Bosco. The primary transportation concerns associated with these projects relate to the adequate provision of parking for new residential units and the potential traffic impacts associated with new garage facilities.

More significant levels of development are proposed for the Midtown Cultural District which abuts the northern section of the Study Area. Three major projects, totaling over 4,500,000 square feet of retail and office space, are proposed: Boston Crossing; Commonwealth Center; and, Kingston/Bedford. The major transportation concerns related to these projects include the new traffic that will be generated, the lack of an adequate westbound connection from the Surface Artery to Avenue de Lafayette and the potential traffic diversions into that could be caused if an adequate connection is not provided.

The construction of the Central Artery project is also a major concern. In particular, these concerns include: the potential effect of construction activity; the location of westbound ramps to Marginal Road that will significantly increase traffic volumes on this street; and the potential land use opportunities that will result from changes to the South Station interchange.



### 3.0 Street Classification

This section presents the street classification, or hierarchy, that was developed for Chinatown. The purpose of the street classification is to assist in the development of strategies and to provide a framework for future efforts. The classification considers the use of the street as a transportation link, including automobile traffic, buses, commercial vehicles as well as pedestrians.

First, several general categories are used:

Arterial - The primary function of these streets is to provide connection to the regional highway network or destinations that are outside the study area and often the downtown.

Collector/Feeder - The primary function of these roadways is to provide connection from the local street network to the arterials. In addition, a secondary function is to provide local circulation needs.

Local Street - The primary functions of these streets is to provide access to the abutting land uses and to serve the internal circulation needs of the area.

Next, each street in the study area is classified according to these categories. This classification is presented graphically in Figure 6. For clarification, this graphic is accompanied by text to address additional issues that are also important. This discussion notes what the emphasis should be for each street, such as pedestrian or delivery vehicle or transit, and highlights areas where conflicts exists.



<u>Street</u>	<u>Section</u>	<u>Classi- fication</u>	<u>Primary Emphasis</u>
Essex	Northern	Arterial	Provide westbound connection to Surface Artery and Central Artery.
Kneeland	Northern	Arterial	Connections to Central Artery and Masspike ramps and points west of the Study Area.
Surface Artery	Northern	Arterial	Connections to Central Artery and Mass Pike ramps
Washington (north of Kneeland)	Northern	Collector- Feeder	Connections from arterials to southern Downtown Crossing and Midtown Cultural; transit routes; some service needs of abutting land uses.
Beach	Northern	Local Commercial	Pedestrian access and service needs of abutting land uses.
Harrison (Essex to Kneeland)	Northern	Local Commercial	Pedestrian access and service needs of abutting land uses.
Tyler (Kneeland to Beach)	Northern	Local Commercial	Pedestrian access and service needs of abutting land uses.
Hudson (Kneeland to Beach)	Northern	Local Commercial	Pedestrian access and service needs of abutting land uses.
Edinboro	Northern	Local Commercial	Access to abutting land uses.
Kingston (south of Essex)	Northern	Local Commercial	Access to abutting land uses.



Oxford	Northern	Local Residential	Access to and parking for abutting residential land uses.
Ping On	Northern	Local	Access to abutting land uses.
Knapp	Northern	Local	Access to abutting land uses.
Washington (south of Essex)	Central	Arterial	Connection to downtown from south and east; bus routes
Tremont	Central	Arterial	Connections to Masspike ramp, local points south and west
Oak St West	Central	Arterial	Connections with other Arterials
Harrison (south of Essex)	Central	Collector-Feeder	Connections between local streets and arterials; connection to parking facilities.
Marginal	Central	Local	Access to abutting land uses
Tyler (south of Essex)	Central	Local Residential	Access to abutting land uses
Hudson (south of Essex)	Central	Local Residential	Access to abutting land uses
Oak	Central	Local Residential	Access to abutting land uses
Tai Tung	Central	Local Residential	Access to abutting land uses
Holland	Central	Local Residential	Access to abutting land uses
Harvard	Central	Local	Access to abutting land uses



Bennett	Central	Local	Access to abutting land uses
Ash	Central	Local	Access to abutting land uses
Nassau	Central	Local	Access to abutting land uses
Maple Place	Central	Local	Access to abutting land uses
Ionny Ct	Central	Local	Access to abutting land uses
Pine	Central	Local	Access to abutting land uses
Herald	Southern	Arterial	Connection to Central Artery
Shawmut	Southern	Local	Service to abutting land uses



#### 4.0 Objectives & Strategies

This section outlines the objectives that were established to improve existing conditions and to provide guidance for the development of future measures. These objectives and strategies are consistent with the street hierarchy system presented in the preceding section.

Strategies are listed with each pertinent objective and are described as either near-term (could be implemented within five years) or long-term (will take longer than five years to implement).

#### 4.1 Traffic Circulation

##### Objectives:

- o Discourage through traffic volumes in commercial core and residential streets.
- o Improve and enhance major arterials on the periphery of the commercial core for through traffic.

##### Near-term Strategies:

- o Eliminate access to Beach Street from Surface Artery, Central Artery ramp and Kingston Street  
Traffic enters Beach Street through the Chinatown Gate to bypass congestion at the intersection of Kneeland and Surface Artery. As a result, congestion is exacerbated in the commercial core of this area and the overall pedestrian environment is deteriorated.

Under this option, Beach Street would remain open to traffic. However, access west of Surface Artery would be via Hudson, Tyler and Harrison (for the block west of Harrison). The street would be closed at the Chinatown Gate, except to emergency vehicles.

- o Redesign the intersection of Kingston and Edinboro Streets  
Kingston Street is often used by vehicles as a short cut to access Beach Street and avoid congestion on the Surface Artery. The intersection of Kingston Street with Beach Street, the Central Artery off-ramp and the Surface Artery is also complex and confusing for motorists and pedestrians.



This option would simplify this intersection by eliminating access from these streets to the Surface Artery. A one-way loop would be formed from Kingston to Edinboro, providing access to abutting land uses.

- o Increase enforcement of No Parking/No Stopping regulations on Essex and Kneeland Streets as part of Traffic Relief Program

Traffic congestion on the major arteries which abut Chinatown constrains access to the area, reduces pedestrian safety and encourages traffic diversions through residential and commercial streets.

Intensive ticketing and towing is needed on these corridors to increase capacity and improve traffic flow.

- o Provide weekend enforcement

Chinatown is a vibrant community on the weekends, attracting many visitors and shoppers. This is in addition to the activity generated by activities in the Downtown Crossing. A result of this activity is a level of congestion that often exceeds mid-week conditions.

Enforcement of curb regulations and double parking is needed on weekends, particularly on Saturdays to reduce congestion on major corridors, such as Essex Street and local streets such as Beach Street and Harrison Avenue.

#### Long-term Strategies:

- o Close Beach Street Exit from Central Artery  
Traffic from this exit enters the intersection of Beach, Kingston and the Surface Artery, complicating the operation of the intersection. In addition, some of this traffic contributes to congestion on Beach Street.

Eliminating this ramp is planned as part of the Central Artery project. It will further simplify this intersection and provide new land use opportunities.

- o Widen Essex Street/Reverse Avery Street  
Access from the north and east to Downtown Crossing and the northern section of the Midtown Cultural District is difficult and circuitous. Exiting these areas to travel west and south is also problematic. The primary inbound routes are via Summer Street, Beach Street and Kneeland to Washington Street; while outbound routes use Harrison Avenue, Temple Street and West Street.



Under this option a new westbound connection would be created by widening Essex Street from the Surface Artery to Avenue de Lafayette. In addition, an outbound movement would be provided by reversing Avery Street and Hayward Place. This would provide relief to streets such as Kneeland Street, Harrison Avenue and Beach Street, as well as reducing future congestion levels in Church Green and Dewey Square.

- o Protect Marginal Road from use as connector to/from regional highway network

Under the proposed Central Artery plan, westbound exit ramps are connected to Marginal Road in the vicinity of Hudson Street. This will significantly increase traffic volumes on this corridor which has many sensitive abutting land uses, such as residential units and a school. Significant pedestrian volumes also cross this corridor between the residential community south of the Masspike and the area north of the Masspike.

The exit ramps, along with new entrance ramps to the Turnpike, should be located in the vicinity of Berkeley and Arlington Streets to protect this area.

#### 4.2 Pedestrian Circulation:

##### Objectives:

- o Improve ease of pedestrian flow within commercial core.
- o Improve pedestrian connections between Chinatown commercial core and other downtown pedestrian origins/destinations, such as the Downtown Crossing, the Midtown Cultural District and MBTA transit stations.
- o Facilitate pedestrian crossings within the Chinatown area, particularly between the commercial core north of Kneeland St. and the residential area south of Herald St.

##### Near-term Strategies:

- o Widen sidewalks on Beach Street  
Beach Street functions as the main pedestrian corridor in the Chinatown commercial core and has significant pedestrian volumes. However, the current sidewalk width and spacing of street furniture reduces capacity and constrains pedestrian mobility at several key locations.



Sidewalks on Beach Street, particularly from the Surface Artery to Harrison, should be widened to accommodate existing pedestrian volumes and potential new pedestrian trips from potential new development in the area.

o Redesign Phillips Square intersection

Phillips Square is a main pedestrian connection between Chinatown and Downtown Crossing. However, pedestrian crossings at this location are difficult and undefined, further complicated by vehicular traffic movements.

A plaza should be constructed in the Harrison Avenue right of way, maintaining adequate width for moving vehicles on Harrison, south of Essex. A traffic signal with pedestrian activated control should also be provided to improve pedestrian and vehicular safety. (N.B.: The implementation of this option ultimately requires the resolution of construction issues related to underground areaways and utilities in the area.)

o Widen sidewalks on Harrison Avenue

The Harrison Avenue right of way between Essex Street and Beach Street is wider than necessary for vehicular traffic. This width facilitates double parking activity on this block, rather than any useful purpose.

The pedestrian environment would be enhanced by widening sidewalks on this block in coordination with the redesign of Phillips Square. An additional benefit of this measure would be to alter the character of this street and de-emphasize Harrison Avenue as a street that serves traffic exiting the Downtown Crossing area.

o Develop guidelines/enforcement strategy for sidewalk vendors and stores to reduce sidewalk encroachment

Commercial activity in Chinatown attracts a significant amount of pedestrians. However, encroachments on the pedestrian right of way by businesses and vendors often adversely affects pedestrian mobility. This occurs on streets such as Harrison Avenue, reducing wide sidewalks to impassable areas.

Measures should be taken to maintain adequate pedestrian corridors by clearly defining the pedestrian right of way relative to vendor and stand locations and enforcing encroachment of these use on needed pedestrian space.



- o Improve pedestrian crossing of Surface Artery at Beach  
The Surface Artery crossing at Beach Street is made difficult by traffic volumes on the Surface Artery and the width of this street.

Measures should be taken to improve the ease of pedestrian mobility at this location.

- o Improve pedestrian crossings of Kneeland Street  
Kneeland Street is an important east-west arterial that serves the downtown and provides connections to the Central Artery. However, significant north-south pedestrian movements cross this street, between the residential community south of Kneeland Street and the commercial area in and around Beach Street.

Measures should be taken to improve pedestrian crossings of Kneeland Street, particularly at Harrison and Tyler.

- o Improve the general pedestrian environment  
Pedestrian mobility and safety is affected by sidewalk surface conditions. Uneven surfaces and poorly placed sidewalk furniture, such as trash cans and newspaper boxes, restrict pedestrian mobility and negatively affect safety. The placement of trees and the use of tree grates with wide opens also acts as a barrier, turning a positive urban amenity into a negative aspect.

Sidewalk repairs are needed in several locations. In addition, sidewalk furniture should be located in areas that reduce intrusion into space needed for the movement of pedestrians. Tree locations should be carefully considered in this context and grates should be used that have narrow slit openings.

Other urban design guidelines and measures should be developed and implemented. Particular attention should be made to provide a suitable transition between Chinatown and peripheral areas, such as Downtown Crossing and the Midtown Cultural District, at gateway locations. Sidewalk materials should also be considered in this larger context to provide uniform, safe materials.



#### 4.3 Parking

##### Objectives:

- o Increase off-street parking opportunities for residents and visitors.
- o Ensure proper use of on-street resident parking and meter spaces.

##### Near-term Strategies:

- o Encourage rate structures and other measures at existing off-street lots that ensure adequate short-term supply  
Off-street parking offers a viable alternative to meet some of the parking needs of the Chinatown community. This could improve parking availability with existing resources and, as a secondary benefit, reduce the occurrence of double parking..

Agreements should be made with existing lot operators to cooperate with area businesses and to charge rates that are conducive to short-term parking. This approach is already being used with several restaurants and the Shopper's garage on Beach Street. Parking validation programs with area businesses should be expanded and enhanced.

- o Provide necessary enforcement of on-street regulations  
Abuse of metered spaces and loading zones decreases the availability of curbspace for these uses. This activity, in turn, produces double parking that impedes traffic flow and reduces pedestrian safety.

Enforcement should be adequate to ensure compliance with resident parking regulations and to achieve desired turn-over at metered spaces and loading zones.

##### Long-term Strategies:

- o Include Chinatown resident and short-term parking spaces in new commercial development projects  
Resident parking is in short supply in Chinatown, particularly in the area abutting the commercial core. Any increases in the currently low auto ownership rate could not be met by the on-street supply. Expansion of short-term parking opportunities is also desirable.



New parking resources should be developed to satisfy existing residential and retail needs and to anticipate future demands. New commercial developments should include spaces for use by Chinatown residents and visitors/shoppers. These spaces should be either specifically designated for these uses or joint use spaces that are coordinated with private commuter parking spaces. New residential developments should find parking to meet their demands satisfactorily.

- o Provide shuttle services from remote lots/garages  
While existing lots and garages provide opportunities to meet Chinatown's parking demand, additional measures should also be explored.

In particular, the use of parking facilities on the periphery of Chinatown should be encouraged, reducing parking demand in the commercial core and traffic volumes on these streets. Shuttle bus service should be provided from these remote locations to serve the Chinatown business district. This service should be coordinated with needs of residents and the Midtown Cultural District to maximize patronage.

#### 4.4 Commercial Vehicles

##### Objectives:

- o Maximize efficient curbspace use of commercial vehicles.
- o Encourage use of off-street loading facilities

##### Near-term Strategies:

- o Designate common loading areas in commercial area  
Most business in Chinatown rely on on-street loading areas to meet their needs. however, existing loading zones are not well located to meet demands.

On-street loading areas should be consolidated to promote accessibility and turn-over.

- o Provide enforcement to encourage access to loading areas  
Commercial vehicles are often observed parked in loading zones for excessive amounts of time, reducing the availability of these spaces for loading purposes. Also, non-commercial vehicles often park in loading zones, further reducing their accessibility.



Enforcement should be provided at a level to ensure that commercial vehicles have access to designated loading areas for weekday and weekend loading activities.

#### Long-term Strategies:

- o Ensure that new development projects provide adequate off-street loading facilities  
Most existing commercial land uses in Chinatown rely on on-street loading areas. New developments offer the opportunity to perform this activity off-street in a fashion that does not impede access and traffic flow.

Off-street loading docks should be provided in all new developments that adequately serve these buildings without affecting traffic flow on adjacent streets.

#### 4.5 Public Transit and Private Transportation Services

##### Objectives:

- o Provide transit services that are compatible with the needs of residents and visitors/shoppers to Chinatown.
- o Coordinate private transportation services

##### Near-term Strategies:

- o Develop and distribute bi-lingual transit information  
Many residents and patrons of Chinatown are not english speaking. However, current transit maps and literature is not translated into any Asian languages that would facilitate their use by non-english speaking residents, visitors or shoppers.

Bi-lingual transit maps should be developed to encourage transit use to Chinatown by outside visitors/shoppers. A distribution strategy should include approaches to reach suburban users who would find the maps useful.

- o Designate on-street drop-off/pick-up location for worker shuttle vans  
Restaurants in suburban communities pick-up and drop-off workers on a regular daily basis. However, no spaces are provided to meet this demand. As a result, the vans double park and are a source of congestion.



Drop-off/pick-up locations should be designated in an area on the periphery of the Chinatown commercial core, but convenient for workers and drivers.

### Long-term Strategies:

- o Develop off-street drop-off/pick-up locations for worker shuttle vans

The need to provide adequate areas for the restaurant van activity should also be examined in a long term context. Consideration should be given to potential sites for off-street loading areas for this important service.

New land available from the Central Artery project or other projects in the area should be examined for potential use as off-street drop-off/pick-up locations. The locations may offer opportunities to reduce further the impacts of the vans and increase convenience to the workers.

- o Develop Surface Bus Transit Node at Chinatown Gate  
Several local and express bus routes have stops on the Surface Artery near Kneeland Street. This location exacerbates traffic congestion during the PM peak period as buses conflict with right turns from the Surface Artery to Kneeland Street.

Consideration should be given to relocating these stops to the land made available by closing the Beach Street off-ramp, providing benches, kiosks and other pedestrian amenities at this location.

- o Incorporate transit service needs of Chinatown community and business area into proposed transit projects

The transit system that serves the Chinatown community will also experience significant change in the long term. This includes potential new services, such as the proposed South Boston Piers connection to the Green Line and the Washington Street Replacement Service.

It is important that the construction of these projects is conducted in a manner that is sensitive to Chinatown, with adequate opportunities for community input. Also, the services themselves should reflect the transit needs of the Chinatown neighborhood and improve access into and out of this area.



#### 4.6 Development and Infrastructure Construction

- o Mitigate negative traffic, parking and construction impacts of new developments and transportation projects.
- o Maximize transportation benefits to community.

##### Near-term/Long-term Strategies:

- o Monitor and participate in the review/design process for development projects

Chinatown is sensitive to the potential impacts of new development. Several major new projects are planned on the periphery of this neighborhood that could have significant effects during construction and after completion.

Measures should be taken to ensure that construction impacts are minimized and agreements are formalized through Construction Management Plans. This includes traffic congestion, parking losses and site related issues, such as the storage of materials and construction vehicles; environmental impacts; and, worker parking issues.

Negative impacts of new commercial development projects should be minimized through Transportation Access Plan agreements. Joint parking uses with abutting Chinatown residents and visitors/shoppers and measures to reduce traffic impacts should be developed and implemented. Residential projects should always provide adequate parking for the new demand; consideration should be given to on-site and off-site solutions.

- o Monitor and participate in the review/design process for transportation projects

New transportation projects, such as the Central Artery, will also have a significant effect on the quality of life in Chinatown. This includes disruption during construction as well the significant changes to access that will occur with the completion of these projects.

Measures should be taken to ensure that construction impacts are minimized and agreements are formalized through Construction Management Plans. This includes traffic congestion, parking losses and site related issues, such as the storage of goods/materials, environmental impacts and worker parking issues.



Projects should maximize the needs of the Chinatown community, improve existing pedestrian connections and reduce current vehicular congestion.

- o Promote Central Artery design that maximizes land use goals of Chinatown community

The Central Artery is one of the constraints on growth of the Chinatown community. It forms a boundary that limits expansion of the residential community and restricts pedestrian access between this community and other abutting areas.

Measures should be taken to maximize the potential land use benefits of this project, providing new, usable parcels for Chinatown. Ramp configurations should promote the development of new land uses that are desirable to Chinatown community and encourage easily accessible pedestrian connections.







DRAFT: FOR DISCUSSION ONLY

Chinatown  
Implementation Program  
(March 16, 1989)

*DRAFT*

DRAFTED, NOT FINAL

1.0 Introduction

The strategies outlined in the previous section have been developed to various levels of detail. In some cases, specific actions are recommended for implementation, pending the approval of the necessary jurisdictional authority. In other case, further analysis or design is needed to prepare recommendations for implementation. Still others are on-going in nature or have long lead times for implementation. This section outlines an implementation process. It is important to note that, in all cases, public notification and input will be provided prior to implementation of specific actions.

2.0 Options for Implementation

Several options were identified through the community process and the technical analysis that had consensus for implementation. First are changes in circulation and regulations that require field test; second is increased enforcement on arterials abutting the commercial district; third are minor sidewalk repairs. These actions would be implemented this spring and are summarized below:

- o Pending BTD approval and proper public notification, the Beach Street access through the Chinatown Gate will be eliminated. This project will be monitored closely over a sixty day trial period to understand circulation and access impacts to the abutting land uses.
- o Regulation changes on Beach Street to eliminate parking and provide loading zones will occur concurrent with the Beach Street circulation experiment. Enforcement will accompany these changes.



- o The Traffic Relief Program will be extended to Kneeland and Essex Streets.
- o Minor sidewalk improvements will be included in Public Works repair efforts.

### 3.0 Options Pending Additional Resources

Other measures have also been identified to improve transportation conditions in the Chinatown. The following measures have consensus for implementation, but resources are not currently available and no timetable has been set:

- o Cadets will be provided at key intersections in Chinatown as resources become available.
- o Measures will be taken to secure necessary enforcement personnel for weekend enforcement.

### 4.0 Options Requiring Further Analysis and Engineering

Several alternatives have been proposed that require further planning and public process prior to implementation. These include capital improvements such as street and intersection redesigns, public transportation service options and private transportation service options. It is anticipated that the necessary planning and engineering will be initiated this spring. The implementation timetable for actions in this category will vary depending on the necessary approval processes, design needs and community process and will range from one to five years. These options are described below:

- o Capital improvements to improve the following locations:
  - Sidewalks on Beach Street;
  - Sidewalks on Harrison Avenue;
  - Plans to improve general pedestrian environment;
  - Pierce Square intersection geometry; and,
  - Kingston and Edinboro intersection design.
- o Bi-lingual maps and transit information should be developed in coordination with the MBTA and the Midtown Cultural District Task Force. Funding sources need to be identified as part of this effort.



- o A location for restaurant shuttle van pick-up/drop-off activity needs to be identified and implemented.
- o A feasibility analysis of shuttle service to remote garages in the area should be conducted.

## 5.0 On-going Efforts

Other efforts identified in this plan require on-going attention by the City or participation by the community. In general, these are related to the development and transportation projects which will affect the Chinatown community. The following identifies the areas of interest:

- o The City will continue to negotiate fee structures and programs with existing off-street facilities that encourage short-term turn-over parking.
- o The City will pursue necessary changes in the Parking Freeze to provide joint use of off-street private spaces by residents and visitors to Chinatown.
- o The community and the City will continue to participate jointly in the review process for new developments to ensure that adequate measures are taken to protect Chinatown and to maximize benefits to the community. Areas of interest include:
  - Construction impacts;
  - Parking resources; and,
  - Traffic impacts.
- o The community and the City will continue to participate jointly in the review process for the CAD/THC project to ensure that adequate measures are taken to protect Chinatown and to maximize benefits to the community. Areas of interest include:
  - Herald/Marginal ramps;
  - Closing Chinatown exit ramp;
  - Other ramp locations, operations and land use opportunities; and,
  - Construction impacts.



- o The community and the City will continue to participate jointly in the review process of other transportation projects to ensure that adequate measures are taken to protect Chinatown and to maximize benefits to the community. Areas of interest include:
  - The design of the widened Essex Street and potential pedestrian impacts;
  - The construction impacts of the Washington Street transit Replacement Project; and,
  - The construction impacts of the proposed South Boston Piers transit connection with Boylston Street.

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## **I BEACH STREET AND HARRISON AVENUE/PHILLIPS SQUARE IMPROVEMENTS**

Improvement alternatives were developed through the joint efforts by the Chinatown-South Cove Neighborhood Council (CNC), the Boston Redevelopment Authority (BRA), the Boston Transportation Department (BTD), and TAMS (BRA traffic consultant).

### **Guiding Principles**

1. Step-by-Step Trial Program Conduct improvement actions on a step by step, temporary trial basis before permanent implementation. During the test periods, impact on local merchants, businesses, and residents can be assessed for further adjustments.
2. Enforcement Increase enforcement efforts by police, meter mates, and others, including weekends and holidays, to control and reduce double parking, parking away from curbside, and abuse of commercial vehicles parking and resident permit parking.

### **I-A Trial Actions for Beach Street Improvement: Phase I (Between Surface Artery and Harrison Avenue)**

1. Prohibit on-street parking during business hours. permit on-street parking during evening and early morning hours, (and perhaps sundays), for resident use. 11 metered parking spaces will be effected, most of these are currently used by long-term parkers who work in the adjacent areas.
  2. Allow 1/2 hour loading/unloading at designated zones along south side of Beach Street.
  3. Close vehicular access to Beach Street at the Chinatown gateway. This should eliminate traffic coming from Surface Artery, Central Artery ramp, and Kingston Street. Emergency access will be accommodated.
- \* Most of the long distance deliveries appear to be originated from the south of the City.
  - \* Since most patrons come on foot, especially during the daytime, businesses on Beach Street do not seem to be negatively impacted by the current closing of the gateway necessitated by the Boston Edison construction.
  - \* Traffic accessing Beach from Hudson or Tyler during the current closing of Gateway does not seem to have created noticeable adverse impact.



4. Prohibit curbside parking at corner of Beach Street intersections to facilitate truck/trailer turning, including Oxford, Tyler, and Hudson Streets.
5. Temporarily close Beach Street from Gateway to Harrison Avenue to create a pedestrianized neighborhood common only for especial events.

\* Special programs, activities, and settings can be designed to promote Chinatown businesses and to reinforce the unique cultural heritage and community history of Chinatown.

#### **I-B Trial Actions for Beach Improvement: Phase II**

1. Improve pedestrian amenities on Beach Street, between Surface Artery and Washington Street, to promote businesses.
2. Create a major connecting node between Chinatown and the Hinge Block of the Midtown Cultural District at the intersection of Beach and Washington Streets.
3. Relocate daily workers pick-up/drop off from Beach Street commercial core to the immediate peripheral areas where some of these activities are already occurring. This will help reduce the street congestion.

#### **I-C Other Related Actions for Beach Street Improvement**

1. Improve traffic circulation near the intersection of Kneeland and Surface Artery.
2. Improve signaling at Kneeland and Hudson street
3. Reduce and discourage long-term parking on surrounding streets during business hours, and increase short-term parking spaces for shoppers and visitors.

#### **I-D HARRISON AVENUE (ESSEX-BEACH) IMPROVEMENT**

The discussions produced no preference for any number of circulation patterns or street treatment. Potential trade-offs between inconvenient access to the Chinatown business core and the reduction of through traffic connecting to the Midtown Cultural District need to be further clarified in the overall context of downtown circulation and proposed improvements.

Changes in the existing traffic direction on Harrison Avenue were explored, including Harrison to two-way street or making it northbound between Essex and Beach were discussed.



All options suggested a major improvement in pedestrian amenities, including creating a pedestrian plaza on either side of the Harrison/Essex intersection or widening the sidewalk.

#### **I-E NEXT STEPS**





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